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Report of the Security Council mission to the Central African Republic, Ethiopia and Burundi, including the African Union

I. Introduction

1. In his letter dated 5 March 2015 (S/2015/162), the President of the Security Council informed the Secretary-General that the Council had decided to send a mission to the Central African Republic, Ethiopia (African Union) and Burundi from 9 to 13 March 2015. The mission was co-led led by the Permanent Representative of Angola to the United Nations, Ismael Abraão Gaspar Martins, and the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, François Delattre. They were joined by the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Samantha Power, in leading the Burundi segment of the visit. The composition of the mission and its terms of reference are set out in annexes I and II to the present report.

II. Central African Republic

A. Background

2. The Security Council mission was the first Council visit to the Central African Republic. Its primary purpose was to assess the situation on the ground just under a year after the adoption of resolution 2149 (2014) of 10 April 2014, in which the Council established the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). The mission was aimed at assessing progress in key areas of resolution 2149 (2014), notably the political process, the security situation, the restoration of State authority, the protection of civilians, the humanitarian and human rights situations, the threat posed by armed groups and their disarmament, and security sector reform, as well as the deployment of MINUSCA and progress on the implementation of its mandated tasks. The visit provided an opportunity for the Council to reiterate to Central African interlocutors its call for the protection of civilians and the implementation of the Brazzaville Agreement, in particular the holding of the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation and the elections in an inclusive and transparent manner.

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B. Meetings in Bangui

3. Upon arrival in Bangui, on 12 March, the members of the Council received detailed briefings from the MINUSCA leadership on the implementation of resolution 2149 (2014), as well as a briefing by the acting Humanitarian Coordinator on the dire humanitarian situation across the country. The serious threats to civilians and the continuing occupation of large areas in the east by armed groups were also highlighted. The Council was briefed by MINUSCA on the improved security situation in Bangui and efforts to enhance security across the country, including operations to expel armed groups occupying major towns and the redeployment of local government authorities and gendarmerie to those areas. The Council was also briefed on the Mission's efforts to protect civilians and communities at risk, with a focus on women, children and internally displaced persons. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, Abdoulaye Bathily, briefed the Council on the internal and regional dynamics surrounding the political process and highlighted critical challenges such as the establishment of a representative republican army, the urgent need to move forward on economic recovery and the importance of addressing marginalization to ensure long-term stability. The members of the Council also had the opportunity to meet and discuss various issues with the United Nations country team and the diplomatic corps in Bangui.

4. On 13 March, the members of the Security Council met with the Head of State of the Transition, Catherine Samba-Panza, and key transitional Government ministers, including the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Reconciliation, Finance, Social Affairs, Justice, and the Prosecutor General. The President of the National Electoral Authority, Dieudonné Kombo Yaya, participated in the meeting with the Head of State of the Transition. The mission also met with the President of the National Transitional Council, Alexandre-Ferdinand Nguendet, and members of the Transitional Parliament. The Council members visited the Benzi-vi camp in Bangui and spoke to internally displaced persons at the site. They also met with members of civil society in the capital, including the religious platform that includes the Imam of Bangui, Oumar Kobine Layama, and the Pastor, Girekoyamet Cibangou. They also paid visits to the European Union military operation in the Central African Republic (EUFOR-RCA) and Operation Sangaris headquarters and received briefings by their respective commanders.

C. Key issues raised during the meetings with the Head of State of the Transition, the Prime Minister, cabinet ministers, the National Transitional Council and civil society

1. Political process

5. In their meeting with the Head of State of the Transition, the members of the Security Council reiterated their strong support for the political process in the Central African Republic and called for the implementation of the Brazzaville process, notably the holding of the Bangui Forum and the legislative and presidential elections. The Council called upon the Head of State of the Transition to ensure that the political process was conducted in an inclusive and transparent

manner and included the participation of women, internally displaced persons and refugees. The Council commended MINUSCA for its efforts in supporting the transition and informed the Head of State of the Transition that the Council was currently considering increasing the Mission's resources so that it could further support the Central African authorities. Council members also commended the international forces (MINUSCA, Operation Sangaris and EUFOR-RCA) and the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic, MISCA, for having prevented a genocide in the Central African Republic.

6. The Head of State of the Transition assured the members of the Security Council that the political process would continue to be conducted in a fully inclusive manner. She noted progress in a number of areas in the past year, including the security situation in Bangui, the redeployment of government representatives to some of the regions, the return of some internally displaced persons and refugees, and the fight against impunity. She also noted that many challenges remained to be addressed, highlighting the financial challenges facing the transitional authority in successfully concluding the transition.

7. Highlighting her commitment to an inclusive political process, the Head of State of the Transition informed the Security Council that local consultations had been concluded in all 16 prefectures and emphasized the importance of that achievement, given that the process had allowed the voices of Central Africans across the country, including internally displaced persons and refugees in neighbouring countries, to be heard. The Head of State of the Transition informed the members of the Council that according to the preliminary outcome of the consultations, Central Africans had expressed concerns mainly with respect to security, disarmament, peace, justice and economic development. Those grievances, she assured, would be considered by the four thematic working groups established to prepare the Bangui Forum, expected to take place at the end of April. She also expressed concern about the lack of resources and called upon the international community to assist in funding the outcomes of the Bangui Forum.

8. Civil society groups welcomed the local consultations and the upcoming Bangui Forum, emphasizing their appreciation for the international community's support in ensuring that the political process moves forward in an inclusive manner. On the next steps, representatives of women's groups urged the further inclusion of women in the political and reconciliation processes, in accordance with resolution 1325 (2000), including in the ongoing preparations for the Bangui Forum. Representatives of civil society also expressed criticism regarding any parallel processes that could undermine and derail the political process in the country and urged the Security Council to ensure that the transition continued to move forward in a transparent manner.

2. Elections

9. Concerning the planned referendum on the Constitution and presidential and legislative elections, the Head of State of the Transition informed the Security Council that while the transitional authorities were doing their utmost to prevent an extension of the transition, the current electoral timetable was facing delays owing to the decision to hold the local consultations as well as operational and financial challenges, including the lack of funding for voter registration. The President of the National Election Authority and the President of the National Transitional Council

echoed that statement, while reassuring the Security Council that their efforts were currently fully focused on the electoral process. In terms of the timeline, the President of the National Transitional Council informed the members of the Security Council that according to his assessment, elections could realistically take place in early 2016. The Head of State of the Transition emphasized that it would be important to conduct the elections properly in order to avoid contestation and possible further violence.

10. Representatives of civil society groups in Bangui pointed to the importance of extending State authority throughout the country before conducting the elections, in order to ensure free and fair elections in a secure environment for the population. In that regard, civil society groups commended MINUSCA for its efforts and support to the transitional authorities to restore the presence of the State in and outside Bangui and called for further operations similar to those conducted in February in Bria, particularly in advance of the elections.

11. Security Council members commended the Central African authorities for their commitment to holding elections in a timely manner, stressing the importance of ensuring that the process remained inclusive. They also stressed the importance, for the transitional authorities, of focusing on the redeployment and extension of State authority throughout the country, with the support of MINUSCA.

3. Disarmament and security

12. In meetings with all interlocutors, the members of the Security Council firmly called upon all armed groups to lay down their weapons without delay and participate in the ongoing political process. Armed groups were encouraged to voice their concerns through the Bangui Forum and to participate in a disarmament process. The members of the Council commended MINUSCA and the international forces for the improved security situation in Bangui, encouraging further efforts to ensure that security was also enhanced in the regions, including in the east of the country.

13. The Head of State of the Transition highlighted the commitment of her Government in addressing the issue of disarmament and pointed out that a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process would be one of the key issues discussed at the Bangui Forum. She explained that a general agreement on the format and approach of a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process would need to be achieved, in order for the transitional authorities to move forward on that issue. Meanwhile, while acknowledging the importance of ethnically balanced and professional security forces, the Head of State of the Transition emphasized the need for the Central African armed forces to be rehabilitated and rearmed, in order to provide security for the Central African people.

14. This message was echoed by nearly all Central African interlocutors, including civil society groups and internally displaced persons. While appreciation was widely expressed regarding the positive impact of the deployment of MINUSCA and the international forces on the security situation, Central African interlocutors reiterated that a functioning national army was urgently needed to support and ensure the restoration of security, safety and the protection of civilians. Women's groups in Bangui added that women, along with children, still found themselves in a vulnerable position and requested further protection, which could be provided by the Central African armed forces along with MINUSCA. The President of the

National Transitional Council assured the Security Council members that once re-established, the Central African armed forces would be ethnically and regionally balanced and would be subject to democratic oversight mechanisms. The members of the Council suggested that, in view of the arms embargo, the Head of State of the Transition bring requests for the provision of equipment to national security forces to the attention of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic.

15. The Head of State of the Transition also made an appeal for the resumption of the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme in the Central African Republic in order to enhance the income and self-sustainment of the transitional authorities and future elected government. Civil society groups, however, voiced hesitation about the timing, stressing the need to extend State authority and establish security beforehand in those areas in order to prevent armed groups from further benefiting from the illegal exploitation of natural resources.

4. Urgent temporary measures and fighting impunity

16. The fight against impunity was highlighted by the members of the Security Council as one of the most important challenges for securing peace and stability in the Central African Republic. In that regard, Council members commended the Head of State of the Transition for her leadership on justice issues and for the transitional authorities' cooperation with the International Criminal Court, in particular with regard to the transfer of the commander of the Lord's Resistance Army, Dominic Ongwen, to The Hague. The Council emphasized the critical need to fight impunity and called upon the National Transitional Council to pass the law on the Special Criminal Court without delay. Civil society groups, and in particular representatives of women's groups and religious leaders, echoed that view, pointing out that the establishment of the Special Criminal Court and the start of its work would send a strong message on accountability to perpetrators of human rights violations.

17. The Head of State of the Transition assured the members of the Security Council that since the signing of the memorandum of intent on the urgent temporary measures, efforts were under way to establish the Special Criminal Court. The President of the National Transitional Council informed the Security Council that the draft law would be adopted during the ordinary session of the National Transitional Council in March. In addition, the Head of State of the Transition asked for further support by the international community in building the capacity of the penal chain and thanked the United Nations for its support in arresting and holding perpetrators of serious crimes accountable. She also made an appeal to the members of the Security Council to add further names to the sanctions list established and maintained by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic and to ensure that those under United Nations targeted sanctions did not move around freely in violation of the sanctions regime.

5. European Union military operation in the Central African Republic and Operation Sangaris

18. The members of the Security Council visited EUFOR-RCA and Operation Sangaris at their headquarters in Bangui and received briefings from their respective

commanders. Council members commended the international forces for their critical role in enhancing security and protecting civilians and for playing a crucial role in bridging the gap ahead of the deployment of MINUSCA. Recognizing the additional tasks and challenges for MINUSCA with the departure of EUFOR-RCA and the drawdown of Operation Sangaris, the Council called upon MINUSCA and the international forces to ensure a smooth transition and handover, with a particular focus on ensuring continued protection to communities at risk. Council members also welcomed the decision of the European Union to establish a one-year military advisory mission in the Central African Republic to support the security sector reform of the Central African armed forces and underlined the importance of close coordination in that regard between the European Union Military Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic and MINUSCA.

6. Humanitarian situation

19. The members of the Security Council reiterated their deep concern about the dire humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic with all interlocutors. They expressed hope that the nearly 440,000 internally displaced persons and more than 425,000 refugees in neighbouring countries could soon return, adding that it would be important to address that issue at the Bangui Forum. In their meeting with the Head of State of the Transition, the members of the Council expressed concern about the living conditions of over 36,000 people, mostly Muslims, confined to seven enclaves across the country. The situation of the nearly 500 internally displaced Fulanis in Yaloké was raised with the Head of State of the Transition, with an appeal to ensure that families and individuals could exercise their right of freedom of movement, in accordance with human rights law and international humanitarian law.

20. The Head of State of the Transition, ministers and representatives of the National Transitional Council all expressed serious concern about the grave humanitarian situation in the country and requested further assistance from the international community. The Head of State of the Transition highlighted that one of the main challenges for the transitional authority was the lack of funds and resources to address poverty and social challenges, which were at the root of the conflict. She highlighted that when thousands of young people were out of work, they were easily manipulated into joining armed groups and resorted to banditry and violence. On Yaloké, the Head of State of the Transition stated that she was not in favour of relocation and preferred focusing on improving living conditions; efforts in that regard were under way, with the assistance of humanitarian groups. Civil society groups highlighted that while non-governmental organizations had done a praiseworthy job in addressing the humanitarian situation and assisting the most vulnerable, civilians were still in need of further support from the international community and the transitional authorities.

21. Security Council members also visited the Benzi-vi site in Bangui, where over 300 internally displaced persons had sought refuge from the violence in December 2013 and had remained owing to the continued insecurity. Many people told the Council members that they lived close by but could not return because of the high level of insecurity. Others added that their homes had been destroyed, urging that the United Nations provide assistance to rehabilitate their homes in order to facilitate their return. Council members assured people at the Benzi-vi site that the return of internally displaced persons and refugees was very high on the Council's

agenda. They also noted that the Council would continue to support and urge the transitional authorities, humanitarian groups and MINUSCA to assist displaced civilians, to ensure that they could return home as quickly and safely as possible.

7. Meetings in Bria

22. On 12 March, the members of the Security Council visited Bria in Haute-Kotto préfecture and met with administration officials, including the mayor, préfet and sous-préfet, as well as members of civil society. The meeting was held at Bria city hall, which had recently been liberated from occupation by ex-Séléka elements. The meeting provided an opportunity for the Council members to hear from the local administration, women's groups, youth representatives, members of the ex-Séléka and others about the impact of the conflict and the improvement of the situation following the deployment of MINUSCA. The members of the Council were briefed in detail on the Mission's efforts to restore State authority in Bria, including assisting the return of local government personnel and gendarmerie. They also visited a labour-intensive construction project in Bria, which had been designed by MINUSCA in support of article 4 of the Brazzaville Agreement to occupy and generate work for young people at risk, women and former combatants. Council members also visited the camp of the Cambodian unit of MINUSCA and received briefings by the Force Commander on the Mission's effort to conduct more flexible and proactive patrols. They also heard the Head of the Bria MINUSCA Office's political assessment on the situation in the préfecture and ongoing efforts to protect civilians. Representatives of international non-governmental organizations in Bria, who also attended the meeting, urged the Council to maintain security and protection of civilians as key priorities for MINUSCA.

23. The mayor noted that despite the recent expulsion of ex-Séléka elements from government buildings, the security situation remained fragile. Representatives from the Comité des Sages added that while the centre was now safer, the outskirts were still not fully safe for the population. Representatives from women's groups echoed that view. The mayor expressed concern about the continued violence against civilians by armed groups and stressed the need to systematically disarm such groups. He highlighted the importance of education for young people and of assistance in restoring the local authorities, for long-term stability. All representatives of civil society, including women and young people, were in agreement with the mayor on that point, emphasizing the need to create work for young people as critical to avoiding a return to arms and banditry. Representatives of women's groups also insisted on the importance of launching reconciliation processes and the need to end impunity and to extend State authority. The Sensitization Committee briefed on the successful and ongoing religious reconciliation efforts in Bria, bringing together Muslims and Christians in mosques and churches. While the members of the ex-Séléka assured the Council that they recognized the central government and were engaged politically to make progress on peace, they were now expecting the transitional authorities to take the next step by reaching out and ensuring a conducive environment for dialogue and reconciliation.

24. The members of the Security Council thanked the local administration and civil society for their frank exchanges and assured them that their messages had been heard. The Council expressed full support to the Central Africans in the key challenges facing the country, including security, State authority, education and

economic recovery, and commended the ongoing reconciliation efforts undertaken in Bria by the Sensitization Committee. The members of the Council commended MINUSCA for its efforts to restore security and State authority in Bria. They also expressed deep appreciation to the non-governmental organizations for their important work.

III. Ethiopia (African Union)

25. On 12 March, members of the Security Council visited Addis Ababa for their annual consultations with the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. The consultations were co-chaired by France, as President of the Security Council, and Namibia, as Chair of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union for the month of March. Libya, a member of the Peace and Security Council, did not attend the meeting. Despite a long agenda and multiple speakers per item, which did not leave time for interactive debate, the tone was largely positive. Following the session, members of both Councils went on to an informal dinner hosted by the Governments of France and Namibia at the residence of the Namibian Ambassador.

26. During the opening session, Namibia, as Chair of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, welcomed the opportunity for frank exchange, noting that 2015 marked an important year for many reasons, including the post-2015 development agenda and the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). Namibia suggested that the two Councils review their past joint communiqués to take stock of the progress made in the partnership and consider new innovations, including through videoconferences between the respective Chair/President each month, communication on agendas and joint visits. France stated that the Security Council recognized the "value added" of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, given its proximity and relationship to countries in conflict. France stressed that the partnership was becoming more effective daily, adding that the presence of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union, Haile Menkerios, was an illustration of coordination across prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

27. The Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, Smail Chergui, commended the developing relationship between the two Councils and recommended that they hold a dedicated seminar on strengthening the partnership on the margins of the next consultations, stressing the need to focus on conflict prevention in particular. He thanked the United Nations for its role in the fight against Ebola. Turning to the agenda, he noted that terrorist groups such as Boko Haram must be fought with "all our might" and called for immediate and sustainable support from the international community, including the Security Council, to the countries of the region. On South Sudan, he stated that the African Union intended to scale up its support and operationalize the ad hoc committee of Heads of State in the coming days. The remarks by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union focused on the same two agenda items and the partnership between the African Union and the United Nations.

28. On the situation in the Great Lakes Region, the United Republic of Tanzania, on behalf of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, stated that the United Nations and the African Union were working together, noting the joint membership in the Regional Oversight Mechanism for the Peace, Security and

Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region and the joint participation in the first meeting of the guarantors for the Framework. It underlined the importance of eliminating negative forces operating in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly the Forces democratiques de liberation du Rwanda, following its failure to respect the 2 January 2015 deadline to voluntarily disarm. The United Republic of Tanzania further stressed the need for the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to urgently settle their differences and undertake joint military operations against the Forces democratiques de liberation du Rwanda, a view echoed by Angola, France, and New Zealand on behalf of the Security Council. It welcomed the idea of the organization of the Great Lakes Private Sector Investment Conference and called upon the World Bank to disburse the sum of $1 billion previously announced as its support to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. The United Republic of Tanzania, supported by France, also called for transparent and credible elections. Angola stressed the need for respect for human rights and accountability for violators, as well as the speedy implementation of the Nairobi Declarations of the Kampala Dialogue, particularly with regard to former combatants of the 23 March Movement. France and New Zealand informed that the Security Council was scheduled to renew the mandate of MONUSCO at the end of the month and expressed the wish to see a greater role for the Mission in human rights, democracy, protection of civilians and efforts to address the root causes of conflict. New Zealand suggested that the Council consider oversight mechanisms in the renewal of the MONUSCO mandate and stressed its responsibility to take the views of troop-contributing countries into account. The situation in Burundi was not directly taken up in the context of this agenda item.

29. With respect to the Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, on behalf of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, commended the efforts of MINUSCA, EUFOR-RCA and Operation Sangaris in creating the necessary conditions for a progressive transition, expressed full support to MINUSCA and warned potential spoilers, particularly ex-Séléka and anti-Balaka elements, against disturbing the transition process. It urged the authorities of the Central African Republic to ensure that elections were held by 15 August 2015 and encouraged the international community to mobilize resources for the country, expressing support for the coordinating role of the International Contact Group on the Central African Republic. France, Chad and Nigeria, on behalf of the Security Council, commended the contributions of MISCA, MINUSCA, EUFOR-RCA and Operation Sangaris and stressed the need for MINUSCA to attain full capability, especially with the drawdown of EUFOR-RCA and possibly of Operation Sangaris. France said that the Council was considering an enhanced troop presence for MINUSCA; Chad and Nigeria underlined the need for MINUSCA to have the necessary strength to provide security. France welcomed efforts to fight impunity, recalling the decision of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to open an inquiry and the Mission's temporary measures mandate, while Nigeria called upon the African Union and the United Nations to work together with the International Commission of Inquiry. France also underlined the need to finance the transition process (elections, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, security sector reform) and reform State structures, while Chad stressed the importance of setting up a national republican army and Nigeria called for lifting the arms embargo on the supply of weapons to the legitimate armed forces. All speakers emphasized the

importance of coordination among the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States and the international community.

30. On Boko Haram, Niger, on behalf of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, welcomed recent statements by both Councils and informed that on 3 March 2015, the Peace and Security Council had endorsed the concept of operations of the Multinational Joint Task Force and authorized the deployment of 10,000 military and other personnel. Noting that some areas had already been recovered as a result of the efforts by members of the Lake Chad Basin Commission, Niger urged the Security Council to rapidly adopt a resolution under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations for the deployment of the Multinational Joint Task Force and a funding arrangement. It underlined the need for a holistic approach that would include socioeconomic development and employment in the affected areas as well as respect for human rights. Chad stressed that the eradication of Boko Haram was a global responsibility and informed that it would present a draft resolution to the Security Council with support from Angola and Nigeria. Nigeria related its actions in the fight against Boko Haram, which included military, socioeconomic and human rights-related policies. It expressed appreciation for the support received from various partners in that regard. Jordan stressed the need for regional and interregional cooperation in the fight against terrorism and for financial and logistical support to the Multinational Joint Task Force.

31. On Mali and the Sahel region, speakers welcomed progress made in the inter-Malian peace talks, especially the initialling of a draft peace agreement on peace and reconciliation by the Government of Mali, a member of the coalition of armed groups "Plateforme" and the international mediation team. Algeria, speaking on behalf of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, and Chad, on behalf of the Security Council, deplored the fact that the Coordination of the coalition of armed groups had yet to initial the draft agreement; Spain suggested that the group would soon do so and expressed hope that a final peace agreement would be signed on 26 March, Martyrs' Day in Mali. Chad called for the two Councils to insist that the remaining armed groups sign the peace agreement, while Nigeria cautioned against rushing the parties to an agreement prematurely. On MINUSMA, Algeria recommended that the Security Council strengthen the Mission, including through an intervention force modelled on MONUSCO. Spain and Chad pointed to the future role of MINUSMA in supporting a peace agreement including the implementation of a ceasefire.

32. On the situation in the Sahel region, speakers called for a holistic and coordinated approach to the challenges in the region. Algeria, on behalf of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, and Chad, on behalf of the Security Council, called for the international community to support the Nouakchott process aimed at enhancing security in the region. Spain emphasized the need to coordinate efforts within the framework of the Ministerial Coordination Platform for the Sahel and underlined that fighting terrorism in the Sahel was a priority. Spain and Chad also underscored the connection between the situation in the Sahel region and Libya. Nigeria noted that the region had been overlooked and was far behind with respect to infrastructure development, industrialization and basic food security.

33. On Libya, there was a broad call for all parties to engage in negotiations, and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union expressed support for the

mediation efforts under the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya, Bernardino Leon. Mozambique, on behalf of the Peace and Security Council, said that it was essential for the two Councils to work with countries of the region, especially Algeria and Egypt. Malaysia highlighted the responsibility of both Councils to curb the illicit trafficking of arms, which had fuelled conflict in the region, and to support the Government to counter the terrorist threat. Jordan added that negotiations were under way within the Security Council on rearming the army. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland said that external actors could not pick sides at the current point and stressed that the Security Council debates on the arms embargo were very serious. Chad said that the two Councils must send the same message, namely, that all must come to the negotiating table, with a view to forming a transitional government of national unity. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela called for donors to fulfil their commitments to the country.

34. On Somalia, speakers recognized the role of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in degrading Al-Shabaab and noted that Somalia was a good example of partnership between the African Union and the United Nations. They commended the progress made towards "Vision 2016", including the adoption of legislation relating to the national electoral commission. Uganda, on behalf of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, called for sustained international support to consolidate gains made, emphasizing the need to provide equipment to the army and to stabilize recovered areas. It noted that the joint African Union-United Nations benchmarking exercise in April 2015 would elaborate a new strategic concept of operations and stressed the need to review the configuration of the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia (UNSOA) to ensure the more effective delivery of logistical support for AMISOM. The United Kingdom welcomed the role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) in supporting the Somali-led process, notwithstanding the political difficulties of the past 12 months, and underlined the need to prioritize the Constitution, prepare the ground for elections in 2016 and empower Somalis through political reform and security sector reform. It looked to the joint assessment as an opportunity to secure supply routes to liberated towns, strengthen stabilization and tackle asymmetric threats. The United Kingdom also pointed to the European Union engagement on the issue of troops' stipends as an example of the multifaceted partnership among the African Union, the United Nations and the European Union. New Zealand cautioned against the possible resurgence of clan violence in the absence of Al-Shabaab and said that the African Union and the United Nations must work together to ensure that the civilian components of the Mission focused on stabilization, including outside Mogadishu. It also welcomed the commitment by the African Union to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela called for global financial support for Somalia.

35. On South Sudan, Ethiopia, on behalf of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, stressed its disappointment in the parties, commended the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), as well as efforts to unify the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) in Arusha, and underscored the need to hold those blocking peace accountable. It noted the recent decision by the African Union Summit of Heads of State and Government to consider the report of the Commission of Inquiry in due course and emphasized the Peace and Security Council's commitment to ensuring that issues relating to impunity were effectively addressed. The United States of America underscored the importance of the

relationship between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and stated that spoilers and capability gaps were the two biggest problems of the two Councils. In that context, it stressed that the Security Council had created the sanctions regime, hoping that it would not be needed, but spoilers "must know there will be consequences". The United States noted that for sanctions to work, however, the buy-in of African countries would be needed both politically and technically. It also called for the release of the Commission of Inquiry report so that the long process of addressing accountability could begin. The Russian Federation said that it was naive to think that targeted sanctions would drastically change behaviours and reiterated that it had supported resolution 2206 (2015) in the spirit of Security Council unity, but did not consider sanctions an effective tool. China called for ongoing support to IGAD and African solutions to African problems, noting its opening of a Permanent Mission of China to the African Union to advance its partnership. Nigeria said that the proliferation of other processes outside of the IGAD umbrella was undermining pressure on parties and stressed that the Peace and Security Council and the Security Council should meet to determine the next course of action if the peace process continued to fail.

36. On Darfur, South Africa commended the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) for the creation of safe havens and the delivery of humanitarian assistance, but noted the decline of the security situation and lack of political progress. It called for the two Councils to work together to harmonize positions in the context of the Government's demands for an exit and the upcoming report of the joint working group on an exit strategy. The Russian Federation said that sanctions should be considered against rebels who showed no signs of interest in negotiation. The United Kingdom said that the strategic review offered an opportunity to refocus the mission on its primary task of protection of civilians and that the exit strategy must be based on conditions, including the Government's willingness and capability to protect civilians. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela welcomed President Bashir's call for national dialogue but stated that it must be inclusive and asked for the views of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union on how to make progress with respect to the Doha and Mbeki processes.

37. On the review of United Nations peacekeeping operations, Burundi, speaking on behalf of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, referred to the changing security environment and increasing attacks against peacekeepers and humanitarian workers. Burundi, supported by Namibia, reiterated that the Peace and Security Council recognized the primacy of the Security Council and acts on behalf of the international community, underscoring the need to resolve the question of sustainable financing. It noted that the African Union was preparing a common African position to be submitted to the panel. France looked forward to the review as an opportunity to increase the efficiency of peace operations, which would require the adjustment of mandates based on needs, more flexible tools and the sharing of resources between missions. France also noted that cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union was a key aspect of the panel's work.

38. On the enhancement of cooperation between the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the Security Council in preventing conflicts and crises, Gambia, speaking on behalf of the Peace and Security Council, commended the African Union's Continental Early Warning System, the Panel of the Wise and the ongoing development of a structural prevention framework, as well as its

comprehensive normative instruments. It called for Security Council support for the preventive efforts of the African Union, regional economic communities and regional mechanisms, as well as the elaboration of mitigating strategies and common messages. Further, it stressed the need to strengthen linkages, including through joint horizon-scanning, biannual meetings on conflict prevention, the synchronization of calendars and joint missions. Gambia, Nigeria and Namibia supported Commissioner Chergui's idea of a seminar to take stock of the partnership. Namibia supported the idea of joint missions, noting the recent joint visit of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the European Union Political and Security Committee to Mali as a model, and suggested videoconferences between respective Chairs and Presidents and communication on agendas. It stressed the need for the two Councils to take stock of the previous nine consultative meetings. Nigeria called for the Security Council to support the full implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture and called for a deeper partnership on conflict prevention and counter-terrorism, also recommending joint discussions on thematic issues. Chile echoed the need to strengthen the conflict prevention partnership in a key election year.

39. New Zealand stated that the relationship between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union remained too ad hoc and called for much stronger engagement, particularly on conflict prevention, including through regular and substantive dialogue between the Councils throughout the year, better sequencing of decision-making between the two bodies, invitations to Chairs and Presidents to meet the opposite Council and the invitation of selected Security Council members to some Peace and Security Council sessions. New Zealand undertook to engage with the Chair of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (South Africa) during its Security Council presidency in July 2015. New Zealand also stressed that the Security Council should be willing to respond quickly to requests from the African Union and that an innovative solution to the financing question could not be put aside. The intervention by New Zealand was the last and contributed to a positive ending to the meeting.

40. The meeting was followed by a press briefing co-chaired by the Ambassadors of France and Angola for the Security Council, the Ambassador of Namibia for the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the Commissioner for Peace and Security for the African Union Commission. The Ambassador of France provided a general summary of the consultation and the panel fielded questions from the media.

IV. Burundi

41. In a letter dated 5 March 2015, the President of the Security Council informed the Secretary-General that the members of the Council had decided to send a mission to Burundi on 13 March 2015. France, Angola and the United States co-led the mission.

42. The Security Council visited Burundi on 13 March 2015. The visit coincided with preparations for the elections in Burundi, with the Security Council-mandated United Nations Electoral Observer Mission in Burundi (MENUB) having been in the country only a little over two months. Its primary purpose, in line with the agreed terms of reference, was to take note of the significant progress made by

Burundi since the adoption of the Arusha Agreement in 2000, notably in the restoration of security and stability in the country, and to welcome Burundi's contribution to and active participation in United Nations and African Union peacekeeping operations, especially in Somalia and the Central African Republic. It aimed to stress the crucial need for a free, transparent, credible, inclusive and peaceful electoral process in 2015 and encourage the Government of Burundi and the Independent National Electoral Commission, as well as all stakeholders in the electoral process, including the opposition, to continue to implement the code of conduct for political parties and political actors and the road map towards the elections and to make further efforts to ensure a space for all political parties and to improve dialogue among all political actors, with a view to ensuring a conducive, free and open environment for the run-up to the 2015 elections. It also aimed to stress that the Security Council pays sustained attention to the electoral process in Burundi; to recall the mandate of MENUB to follow and report on the electoral process before, during and after the elections, in accordance with resolution 2137 (2014); and to call upon the Government of Burundi, the Independent National Electoral Commission and all relevant electoral stakeholders to ensure close cooperation with MENUB in that regard. Other aims included assessing the efforts made by the Government of Burundi to improve the human rights situation in the country; calling for further efforts to address concerns about restrictions on freedom of expression and opinion, peaceful assembly and association, continued threats against journalists and representatives of civil society, including those who work on human rights, and reports of intimidation, harassment, political violence, arbitrary arrest and detention; expressing concern about the insufficient progress on the fight against impunity; calling for the Government of Burundi to deploy greater efforts to ensure that all human rights violations and abuses are seriously investigated and that perpetrators are held accountable; stressing the utmost importance of fighting against poverty; and reiterating its call on the United Nations country team and its component United Nations agencies to scale up their activities.

43. The delegation held meetings with MENUB, the United Nations country team and its Resident Coordinator, the Minister of Interior, the Minister of External Relations and International Cooperation, the Independent National Electoral Commission, the Independent National Human Rights Commission, political parties and young people affiliated with political parties, civil society and faith-based organizations and media representatives. The delegation was also received by President Pierre Nkurunziza.

A. Key issues

1. Elections and political developments

44. The Special Envoy and Head of MENUB, Cassam Uteem, briefed on the progress made in preparation for the elections and efforts to facilitate political dialogue. The Special Envoy emphasized that the 2015 elections were decisive and would contribute to enhancing democracy and consolidating peace and national reconciliation. However, the elections were also difficult because of the absence of a real political space and political dialogue, which could exacerbate political tensions and return Burundi to the dark hours of its past. He stressed that successful elections would open up new prospects in Burundi and allow Burundians and the elected leaders to tackle the real challenges of the country, namely, health, education

and employment. Contested elections could pave the way to instability and to a crisis between the governors and the population, with severe consequences for the Great Lakes region.

45. The Special Envoy informed that since 1 January 2015, MENUB representatives had been encouraging the Government and the Independent National Electoral Commission to take steps to improve relations with the political parties involved in the electoral process. Also, to respond to some criticisms, the Commission had agreed to correct some deficiencies. For their part, stakeholders remained fully involved in the process. The Special Envoy informed that, supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Commission's data processing centre had completed the voter register operations. The provisional electoral lists would be posted in the coming days in the various provinces and MENUB observers were trained and ready to observe that process.

46. The United Nations Resident Coordinator, Zacarias Agostinho, underlined that peace consolidation remained an ongoing priority as the precondition for development. In that context, the upcoming general elections would be a critical milestone either by reinforcing the progress made or by triggering a relapse into conflict in the absence of preventive measures and contingency planning. The Peacebuilding Fund had played an important role in supporting peace consolidation in the past and present and would continue to do so in the future. Given that peace consolidation was a long-term process, the Fund had approved a third peace priority plan.

47. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Laurent Kavakure, said that there was no doubt that the elections in Burundi would be democratic and transparent. He reiterated that the existing legal mechanisms (the Constitutional Court) would resolve issues, including on the third mandate for President Nkurunziza, and that the Government of Burundi was a guarantor of the Constitution and the Arusha Agreement. While there were differing interpretations of the Constitution, he pointed out that only the Constitutional Court — not political parties, churches or civil society organizations — could interpret the Constitution. He added that while there were tensions, the main problem facing the elections was financial support. The elections were taking a toll on the budget. He asked for additional funding and financial resources and expressed the hope that the Security Council would send a message that would lead to more financing for the electoral process. He referred tithe calm and peaceful elections in 2005 and 2010 and expressed the belief that the elections in 2015 would be the same.

48. The Minister of Interior, Edouard Nduwimana, thanked the United Nations for accepting the Government's request for an observer mission, adding that the Ministry had been working closely with MENUB. As with other countries, pre-election periods were characterized by increased tensions. In 2013, the Government had organized a workshop and established an electoral road map that served as a guide. He recalled that a code of conduct had also been signed. All of those steps were helping to calm tensions and to create an environment conducive to elections. He further recalled the recent signing of a charter on non-violence, another tool that the Government was using to ensure inclusion. The Minister noted that political parties in Burundi suffered from low capacity. He recalled that in 2005, only 12 parties had participated in the elections. In 2010, while there were 41 parties accredited, only 24 had participated in the elections. There were many

political parties, but only three had the capacity to attract support from the entire country. He highlighted the inclusiveness of participation in the country, mentioning that women had the right to hold decision-making posts and that all ethnicities could as well. The Government had noticed that Burundian political parties were beginning to coalesce and form coalitions and welcomed that development. He recalled that the Government had adopted a new law on public gatherings and that 90 per cent of civil society organizations liked the law, given that the process had involved all stakeholders. The National Assembly had also discussed the media law. The Minister believed that the Government should be congratulated for having such a large number of radio stations and that civil society in Burundi had evolved just as the political parties had evolved. The Minister closed by reaffirming the Government's commitment to the Arusha Agreement, as it had enabled Burundi to make progress and set up strong institutions. Burundi wanted strong institutions, not necessarily strong individuals. He reiterated that the people of Burundi could rest assured that the elections would be held under excellent conditions, as in 2005 and 2010.

49. The President of the Independent National Electoral Commission recalled that the five commissioners were first appointed by political parties and then by presidential decree. The National Assembly was involved in that process, as well as the Senate. He briefed on the Commission's current activities, saying that they had gathered data on voters and were compiling the provisional voters list. They had finished computerizing the collection of data and would soon be sending out the voters list. He recalled the plans to reopen the voter registration process, for those who had not been able to register in November and December 2014. He highlighted that the Commission had been a permanent body since 2009 and that the electoral process would include national and international observers.

50. He recalled that he had been President of the Independent National Electoral Commission for the elections in 2010 and reaffirmed the Commission's commitment to a fair and open electoral process. Regarding the eligibility of the President to run for a third term, that could be addressed only by the Constitutional Court. He recalled that leading an electoral commission in Africa was a permanent ongoing challenge. The Commission's engagement with the diplomatic community and political parties had been helpful and they had received advice from all actors.

51. During the meeting with leaders of major political parties, which leaders of youth leagues affiliated with political parties had also attended, opposition parties, including Sahwanya-Front pour la démocratie au Burundi (Sahwanya-FRODEBU), FRODEBU-Nyakuri, Forces nationales de libération (FNL) and Union for Peace and Development, as well as Agathon Rwasa and Charles Nditije, underscored the lack of political space, the restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly and the arming of youth groups (Imbonerakure) that threatened the peace, security and stability of the country in the lead-up to the elections. They specifically warned of the possibility of Imbonerakure youth manning polls around the country as a means of intimidating voters. Opposition parties also reported not being able to hold press conferences and being restricted from moving around the country. On the other hand, they criticized the lack of independence of the Independent National Electoral Commission, which they believed was biased in favour of the ruling party, and the lack of transparency in the way the Commission handled the voter registration process. The opposition parties highlighted the risk for violence in the country should President Nkurunziza run for a third term and all of them called upon the

Security Council to exert all its might to dissuade President Nkurunziza from running for a third term, stressing the risks that it entailed for the stability of the country.

52. The Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces pour la défense de la démocratie (CNDD-FDD) commended the work of the Independent National Electoral Commission while recognizing that there had been problems at the beginning of the voter registration process. They also criticized the opposition as weak and willing to bypass the electoral process to get into power. They argued against allegations that the CNDD-FDD youth wing (Imbonerakure) was preventing the activities of political parties. With regard to the third term, the President of CNDD-FDD stressed that some political parties and civil society organizations were using the issue as a pretext to incite young people to protest. The Coalition for Peace in Africa, a coalition of nine political parties close to the CNDD-FDD-led Government, recognized that thanks to the Arusha Agreement, the country had achieved progress but that since 2005, the country had been guided by the Constitution, which had been voted by the population, not just a group of a few political movements. As for the third term, representatives of the Coalition indicated that any problem with the interpretation of the Constitution would be dealt with by the Constitutional Court.

53. Civil society organizations and the media also had the opportunity to express their views to the Council members. The majority addressed the divisions and tensions relating to a possible third term for President Nkurunziza, believing that it was a violation of the Arusha Agreement and of the Constitution and was likely to lead to violence. They specifically asked the Security Council to advise President Nkurunziza to renounce the possibility of a third mandate because such a decision would lead to violence. They called upon the Council to do everything in its power to preserve peace and stability in Burundi. The representative of Ligue ITEKA further informed that any attempt by President Nkurunziza to run for a third term would cause chaos in the country. The civil society organizations were also concerned about general insecurity before and during the elections. Civil society activists also called for the release of political prisoners who had been arrested, so that they could participate in the upcoming elections. The representative of Association pour la protection des droits humains et des personnes détenues expressed concern about divisions within the security forces. Another concern among the majority of the civil society organizations and the media was the restricted political space, with media representatives recalling personal accounts of restrictions of their rights as journalists.

54. Pro-Government civil society organizations, Observatoire national des élections et des organisations pour le progrès and Ligue Izere Ntiwihebure were also present at the meeting. Observatoire national des élections et des organisations pour le progrès condemned some members of the Security Council for constantly criticizing the Government but never the opposition's behaviour. It also criticized donors for not providing financial support to pro-Government civil society organizations. The representative of Ligue Izere Ntiwihebure further advised against being pessimistic about the electoral atmosphere. The civil society organizations underlined that women were the ones in the front line and therefore urged respect for the laws and sought guarantees of peace and peaceful and transparent elections.

55. During his meeting with the members of the delegation, President Pierre Nkurunziza thanked the Security Council for the balanced statement adopted on 18 February on Burundi and for the continuous engagement in the country. He asserted that Burundi enjoyed peace and aspired to development. He proudly stressed that Burundi was now exporting peace to other countries such as Somalia and the Central African Republic through the presence of its peacekeepers.

56. With regard to elections, President Nkurunziza observed that that was a normal process and that the Government was in a continuous dialogue with civil society organizations and political parties to improve the political environment. In that regard, he mentioned that various texts had been adopted and several actions had been taken, notably in connection with freedom of expression. He also noted progress in the preparation of the elections, underlining that the population had registered and that there was dialogue at every step of the process to correct irregularities and make further progress. He informed members of the Security Council that the Independent National Electoral Commission was about to post the provisional lists of voters and that the operation would give the population an opportunity to challenge the lists prior to the partial reopening of the voter registration process.

57. President Nkurunziza also reiterated that the 2015 elections would take place in a peaceful environment and would be organized in the best conditions possible, insisting that the Government had asked the region and the international community to deploy observers. He further commended the Minister of Interior for his supervision of the work of political parties and civil society organizations and said that he was pleased with the MENUB presence and its support in the signing of the Charter on Non-Violence. The President also told the Security Council delegation that goodwill was not enough to organize elections: one also had to have resources and, in that regard, the United Nations must help Burundi to mobilize the required resources. He further called for political support, underlining that all concerned parties had to lend their support to the process, including government, political parties and civil society organizations.

58. The President stressed that Burundi was a democratic country and that for the first time ever, elected institutions had been able to complete their mandates without being brutally disrupted. He considered that the country was in an electoral phase and that everyone was trying to position himself, which was normal. He added that it was also normal for people to have their own interpretation of the Constitution, but what was more important was that people respect the Constitution. The debate about the third term was a sign that there was democracy in Burundi. In the same vein, President Nkurunziza stressed that the Constitution found its source in the Arusha Agreement and in the comprehensive ceasefire agreement. As a matter of fact, he said, the competent institution would decide, not the people on the streets, stressing that the referee in that matter was the Constitutional Court. He also stated that everyone had the right to be elected and that preventing anyone from being elected would create a bad precedent. He further said that calling people to the streets to demonstrate would be irresponsible.

2. Security

59. The Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Interior highlighted that the army and police in Burundi were guaranteeing security. They stated that the

Government was doing everything so that the situation improved in the pre-election period. The Minister of Interior emphasized that the country had a comprehensive national security programme. Security measures were being implemented throughout the country and at all levels of government. He reiterated that security would be guaranteed throughout the elections.

60. Major opposition parties and civil society groups decried the rising insecurity in the country, which made it difficult for them to carry out their outreach. They specifically pointed out that the arming of CNDD-FDD youth (Imbonerakure) threatened the peace, security and stability of the country in the lead-up to the elections.

61. Assessing the political and security environment during the 2015 elections, President Nkurunziza indicated that his message to the Government, political parties and civil society organizations was that Burundians should understand that peace and security were the responsibility of all.

3. Development

62. The United Nations Resident Coordinator and other members of the United Nations country team briefed the Security Council on their various mandates relating to development. The Minister for Foreign Affairs highlighted the strategic framework for eradicating poverty and asked for the country team to be strengthened in order to launch more projects more quickly. He recalled the Security Council presidential statement of 18 February (S/PRST/2015/6) and the call for development assistance. He appealed to the various partners to respect their commitments. The Resident Coordinator recalled the need for development assistance and asked that the United Nations strengthen the country team and its programmes. That call was echoed by the President.

4. Human rights

63. The representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Burundi, Patrice Vahard, informed the Security Council of the Office's mandate in Burundi as it related to the protection of human rights in the country. He informed that the High Commissioner was planning a visit in April, which showed the priority accorded to the situation in Burundi.

64. Members of the Security Council also held discussions with the Independent National Human Rights Commission represented by the Deputy President, Sonia Ndikumasabo. Ms. Ndikumasabo informed the Council that the fight against impunity was a major challenge for the Commission, owing to the lack of independence of the justice system. She added that Burundians had very little confidence in the justice system. The Deputy President emphasized that the Commission had very good relations with magistrates; however, they were reluctant to apply the law in "delicate" cases and awaited instruction from above, implying the executive. The Commission had held workshops for the magistrates in an effort to build their capacity. She informed Council members that the Commission had very limited means to fulfil its mandate. While the Commission was represented in all provinces of the country, the workforce was very weak and experts had no means of transportation to investigate reports and cases. When asked specifically about her views on the independence of the Constitutional Court, the Deputy President gave the example of the Court turning down the Government's draft law on media, which

was indeed inconsistent with the Constitution. Some had interpreted that as a sign of the independence of the Court vis-à-vis the Government. However, the Deputy President also expressed doubts concerning the independence of the Court, stating that some observers also believed the Court might have turned down the draft media law to appear independent ahead of deciding in favour of the ruling party on the third term decision.

65. Civil society and political parties also raised concerns about the violation of human rights, especially those relating to the freedom to assemble. Democracy could not exist without certain freedoms, including freedom of association and opinion, freedom of expression and freedom of the press. The Minister of Interior defended the Government's record on the protection of human rights, especially on the freedom of the press. He suggested that the Government should be congratulated for having a large number of radio stations and that civil society in Burundi had evolved just as the country's political parties had evolved.

B. Observations

66. Members of the Security Council commended Burundi for the hard-won peace that it had forged over the past decade, its stellar contributions to United Nations peacekeeping in the Central African Republic and Somalia and its progress in economic development. While members of the Government expressed their commitment to holding free, credible, inclusive and peaceful elections, most members of the political opposition and civil society reported that the pre-election environment was not inclusive or peaceful. Several reiterated their fear that an announcement by President Nkurunziza of his intention to run for a third term would lead to violence and called upon the Council to advise President Nkurunziza on that point. Members of the Council urged Government officials to ensure a free and inclusive environment before, during and after the elections and urged that the President balance the need to maintain the peace established through the Arusha Agreement in his decision on elections.

Annex I

Composition of the Security Council mission to the Central African Republic, Ethiopia and Burundi, including the African Union

Composition

Ambassador Ismael Abraão Gaspar Martins (Angola), co-head of mission

Ambassador Mahamat Zene Cherif (Chad)

Ambassador Carlos Olguín Cigarroa (Chile)

Counsellor Zhao Yong (China)

Ambassador François Delattre (France), co-head of mission

Ambassador Dina Kawar (Jordan)

Ms. Siti Hajjar Adnin (Malaysia)

Ambassador Jim McLay (New Zealand)

Ambassador Usman Sarki (Nigeria)

Mr. Petr Iliichev (Russian Federation)

Ambassador Juan Manuel González de Linares Palou (Spain)

Ambassador Peter Wilson (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Ambassador Samantha Power (United States of America), third co-head of mission to Burundi

Minister Counsellor Zael Alexis Fernández Rivera (Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of))

Annex II

Terms of reference

Central African Republic

1. To recall that the Central African Republic authorities bear the primary responsibility to protect all populations within their territory from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity and to emphasize that any sustainable solution to the crisis in the Central African Republic should be owned by that country.

2. To commend the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic, Operation Sangaris and the European Union military operation in the Central African Republic for the work done in laying the foundation for increased security ahead of and in support of the deployment of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

3. To express grave concern that armed groups continue to destabilize the Central African Republic and pose a permanent threat to the peace, security and stability of the country, and to further express concern at the recent increase in kidnappings and attacks against humanitarian workers in the Central African Republic, which impedes humanitarian access to vulnerable populations.

4. To reiterate the appeal to all parties and stakeholders, particularly the leaders of the ex-Séléka and anti-Balaka groups, as well as all other armed groups, to immediately cease all forms of violence, including sexual violence, to permanently lay down their arms, to release all children from their ranks, and to embark upon the path of dialogue as the only viable means towards achieving lasting reconciliation and peace.

5. To remind all parties of their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law to ensure the immediate, full, safe and unhindered civilian-led delivery of humanitarian assistance and the principle of safe, dignified and sustainable return of internally displaced persons and refugees.

6. To commend efforts by the transitional authorities to gather views of local citizens in advance of the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation by dispatching Government ministers and officials throughout the Central African Republic and to welcome the holding of the Bangui Forum as an important milestone for a comprehensive political dialogue and reconciliation process at the local and national levels.

7. To reiterate the call upon the transitional authorities to accelerate the transition process and to take concrete action, with the full, effective and equal participation of women, for the holding of free, fair, transparent and inclusive presidential and legislative elections that allow for the full, effective and equal participation of internally displaced persons and Central African Republic refugees, no later than August 2015; the fight against impunity, including for crimes of sexual and gender-based violence; the formulation and implementation of a disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation strategy; and the rebuilding of effective State institutions, including through security sector reform.

8. To reinforce the need for an inclusive and effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, as well as repatriation and resettlement, in the case of foreign fighters, including women and children formerly associated with armed forces and groups, while respecting the need to fight impunity.

9. To stress the important role of the internal security forces (police and gendarmerie) in the restoration of security in the Central African Republic and encourage the Central African Republic authorities to initiate the reform process of the Central African Republic armed forces, to include appropriate vetting procedures in order to put in place a professional, representative and balanced army, including through the adoption of measures to absorb elements of the armed groups meeting rigorous selection criteria, building the capacity of the security forces to address sexual and gender-based violence and retraining part of the Central African Republic armed forces.

10. To welcome in this regard the decision of the European Union to establish a one-year military advice mission based in Bangui (European Union Military Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic), as requested by the transitional authorities of the Central African Republic, in order to contribute to providing them with expert advice on reforming the Central African Republic armed forces and to underline the importance of a clear distribution of tasks and close coordination between the international forces or missions in the Central African Republic and the lead role of MINUSCA in this regard.

11. To assess the deployment of the military, police and civilian components of MINUSCA; the initial work of the Mission in implementing its mandate; the establishment of the Bangui task force; and the reconfiguration of the Mission following the violent incidents in Bangui in October.

12. To urge MINUSCA to accelerate the deployments of its civilian, police and military capabilities, including gender advisers and women protection advisers, in the Central African Republic in order to reach its full operational capacity as soon as possible and enable the Mission to effectively discharge its mandate over the entire national territory.

13. To assess the security situation and the ability of MINUSCA to intensify the implementation of its mandate, in particular to protect civilians under threat of physical violence; prevent and report on all forms of violence, including sexual-based violence; support the implementation of the transition process, in particular the reconciliation and electoral processes, with the full and effective participation of women; facilitate the civilian-led delivery of humanitarian assistance; support the promotion and protection of human rights; support national and international justice and the rule of law and support the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation and security sector reform processes, in accordance with the priority tasks set out in paragraph 30 of Security Council resolution 2149 (2014).

14. To assess the plight of vulnerable populations in the Central African Republic, including those located in enclaves in Bangui and around the country.

15. To urge the former troop- and police-contributing countries of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic that have been rehatted to MINUSCA to expedite the procurement and deployment of remaining additional contingent-owned equipment.

16. To call upon all international partners of the Central African Republic to provide urgent financial contributions to support national dialogue and reconciliation, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform processes and the restoration of the judicial and penal chains in order to fight against impunity.

17. To further call upon all international partners to provide support to the electoral process as a matter of urgency, particularly through financing the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) multi-donor basket fund for elections.

18. To express grave concern at the threat to peace and security in the Central African Republic arising from the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, and the use of such weapons against civilians affected by armed conflict, and to recall in this regard the important contribution that the Council-mandated arms embargo can make to countering the illicit transfer of arms and related materiel in the Central African Republic and its region and to supporting post-conflict peacebuilding, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform.

19. To stress the urgent and imperative need to end impunity in the Central African Republic and to bring to justice perpetrators of violations of international humanitarian law and of abuses or violations of human rights, including sexual violence, underlining in this regard the need to bolster national accountability mechanisms and to implement without delay the Memorandum of Understanding on Urgent Temporary Measures of 7 August 2014, which describes, in particular, the establishment of a national special penal court in charge of investigating and prosecuting the serious crimes committed in the Central African Republic.

20. To welcome the ongoing cooperation of the transitional authorities of the Central African Republic with the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, who opened an investigation on 24 September 2014, following the request of the national authorities, into alleged crimes committed since 2012.

21. To exchange views with members of civil society, including local women and women's organizations in the field, in accordance with paragraph 6 of Security Council resolution 2122 (2013).

22. To express concern that illicit trade, exploitation and smuggling of natural resources, including gold, diamonds and wildlife poaching and trafficking, continue to threaten the peace and stability of the Central African Republic.

23. To note the critical importance of effective implementation of the sanctions regime, including the key role that neighbouring States and regional and subregional organizations can play in this regard and encourage efforts to further enhance cooperation.

24. To call upon the transitional authorities to continue their efforts to restore sound and transparent public financial management, in line with the recommendations of the recent International Monetary Fund mission in Bangui (November 2014), in particular to mobilize domestic resources, particularly customs revenues, in full respect of financial best practice, in order to meet the expenses related to the functioning of the State; implement early recovery plans; and revitalize the economy.

25. To express its appreciation for the international mediation led by President Denis Sassou N'Guesso of the Republic of Congo and comprising Soumeylou Boubeye Maiga, on behalf of the African Union, and Abdoulaye Bathily, on behalf of the United Nations, as well as the Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States as rapporteur, in view of the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation and the upcoming legislative and presidential elections, and the constructive engagement of the region in this regard.

African Union

26. To strengthen partnership and enhance cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations through an exchange of views on issues of interest to both the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, in accordance with Security Council resolution 2033 (2012).

27. To exchange views and explore ways of reinforcing and supporting the African Union conflict prevention tools.

28. To exchange views on situations of interest to both the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, on the basis of an agenda to be agreed by both Councils.

Burundi

29. To take note of the significant progress made by Burundi since the adoption of the Arusha Agreement in 2000, notably in the restoration of security and stability in the country, and to welcome Burundi's contribution to and active participation in United Nations and African Union peacekeeping operations, especially in Somalia and the Central African Republic.

30. To stress the crucial need for a free, transparent, credible, inclusive and peaceful electoral process in 2015, with the effective participation of women as observers, voters, candidates and mediators, in order to ensure that the significant progress achieved is not reversed.

31. To encourage the Government of Burundi and the Independent National Electoral Commission as well as all stakeholders in the electoral process, including the opposition, to continue to implement the code of conduct for political parties and political actors and the road map towards the elections and to make further efforts to ensure a space for all political parties and to improve dialogue between all political actors, with a view to ensuring a conducive, free and open environment for the run-up to the 2015 elections.

32. To stress that it is critical that the Independent National Electoral Commission continue to take effective measures to strengthen the public's confidence in the electoral process, and also to encourage the opposition to play its part and remain engaged throughout the electoral process and to use peaceful and democratic means to address any electoral dispute.

33. To recall that the Security Council pays sustained attention to the electoral process in Burundi and to recall the mandate of the United Nations Electoral Mission in Burundi (MENUB) to follow and report on the electoral process before, during and after the elections, in accordance with resolution 2137 (2014), and to call upon the Government of Burundi, the Independent National Electoral Commission

and all relevant electoral stakeholders to ensure close cooperation with MENUB in this regard.

34. To assess the efforts made by the Government of Burundi to improve the human rights situation in the country and to call for further efforts to address concerns about restrictions on freedom of expression and opinion, peaceful assembly and association, continued threats against journalists and representatives of civil society, including those who work on human rights, and reports of intimidation, harassment, political violence, arbitrary arrest and detention.

35. To express concern about the insufficient progress on the fight against impunity and call for the Government of Burundi to deploy greater efforts to ensure that all human rights violations and abuses are seriously investigated and that perpetrators are held accountable.

36. To stress the utmost importance of fighting against poverty and to emphasize the need for the United Nations system and the international community to maintain their support for peace consolidation and long-term development in Burundi, calls upon the Government of Burundi and international and regional partners to fully implement the mutual commitments made in the joint communiqué of the round-table meeting held in Bujumbura in December 2014, welcoming the continued engagement of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

37. To reiterate its call on the United Nations country team and its component United Nations agencies to scale up their activities and to emphasize the need to address the implications of the departure of the United Nations Office in Burundi as identified in the Joint Transition Plan, in particular in the areas of political dialogue, high-level facilitation and advocacy, and human rights; to ensure that women, peace and security functions and overall efforts towards inclusion are properly embedded and resourced within the United Nations country team and are part of the political dialogue with the Government and MENUB.